



**Montgomery County, MD
Commission on People with Disabilities
Meeting Summary Minutes
June 9th, 2010**

Welcome and Approval of May Meeting Summary Minutes:

Mark Maxin, Chair, convened the meeting. Mark motioned for the May Meeting Summary Minutes to be approved. Charles Crawford, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the May Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Presentation: "Montgomery County Council Budget on Disability Programs" ~ The Honorable Phil Andrews, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council

Councilmember Phil Andrews gave a brief summary of the Council's budgetary actions that affected people with disabilities. The Council restored \$1M to reduce the cuts that were given to contractors that work for agencies that provide various services for individuals with disabilities. This is a reduction from the 7% cut that the County Executive's budget proposed. The Council also restored \$165K to organizations that serve individuals with developmental disabilities and \$70K for respite services. Those were the three main areas that the Council took action to mitigate the impact of proposals from the Executive's proposed budget. Due to the economy and cuts at the state level, next year's budget will see similar challenges.

Aaron Kaufman, Vice-Chair, asked about services for individuals in need of mental health services. Councilmember Andrews noted that \$25K was restored for the Mental Health Crisis Hotline managed by the Mental Health Association. Approximately \$2.5M was restored to the Health and Human Services budget overall.

Jackie Simon, Commissioner, asked about cuts to Ride On. She is concerned of the effects the cuts will impose on MetroAccess service. Councilmember Andrews explained that the Council restored a large amount of funding to Ride On. The cuts are modest with no eliminations in routes and some minor changes in frequency and some legs of the route. The Council has always been a strong supporter of a strong Ride On system, and the Council will continue to look at routes to see if there are better ways to spend always scarce dollars. Paul Meyer, Commissioner, noted that MetroAccess will be strict with the ¾ mile rule, meaning any trip that begins or ends more than ¾ of a mile from the nearest bus stop or Metrorail station is subject to a supplemental fare, in addition to the \$3.00 base fare. MetroAccess will also be adding an additional \$1.00 per zone.

Councilmember Andrew thanked the Commission for their hardwork and dedication, and for the support given in February for Bill 46-09: Hiring Preference for People with Disabilities. The Council will continue to work to advance opportunities for individuals with disabilities in both employment and services.

Presentation: "Health Tip of the Month – Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Disease" ~ John Miers, Commissioner

John Miers, Commissioner, talked about the Federal Government Health & Human Services initiative Healthy People 2010 (www.healthypeople.gov), which is a comprehensive set of disease prevention and health promotion objectives for America. Out of the 467 objectives, 207 involve persons with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities tend to be overlooked or ignored by the medical community. They are also just as likely as their peers to be sexually active. John would like the Commission to develop awareness materials to be given to every health care provider in Montgomery County, as well as raise awareness with individuals with disabilities regarding their rights and entitlements.

Update from the Chair and Vice Chair:

Aaron Kaufman, Vice-Chair, announced that Councilmember Mike Knapp is not seeking re-election to the County Council. He will pursue new efforts to promote life sciences and job growth in the Washington region.

Mark Maxin, Chair, said that the Charter Review Commission recently sent a letter rejecting the Schedule A Hiring Authority to be put on the November election ballot. The Council does have the authority to include Schedule A on the ballot without the Charter Review Commission sanctioning it. There is a hearing on June 15th before the Council to raise this and other issues. Mark will attend this hearing.

Mark spoke with Councilmember Andrews prior to the meeting, who does not think the Council will approve the Schedule A ballot initiative due to the language of the proposed Charter amendment. Mark recommended that given Councilmember Andrew's perspective and the politics surrounding November's election, the Schedule A issue should be tabled until the next election cycle. In the meantime, he would like to figure out a practical strategy for educating the Council and the public about Schedule A. Jackie Simon, Commissioner, recommended aligning with the League of Women Voters. Charles Crawford, Commissioner, asked for clarification of why the Charter Review Commission rejected the language. Mark explained that they thought other disadvantaged groups would feel discriminated against by the hiring preference. He argued that there is justification for the hiring preference given the high level of unemployment for individuals with disabilities and an already practiced precedent in the federal government. Trish Galallee, Commissioner, said that it's difficult to talk about a hiring preference during a political year when so many individuals have been laid off, and that we as voters need to understand it is a volatile subject.

Betsy Luecking, Staff, noted that the Commission has made great strides in the area of employment for persons with disabilities in the past four years. Accomplishments include:

- The Customized Employment Internship Program, of which 17 people are placed and receiving two years of job experience.
- The QUEST Intern Partnership in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services. The program is modeled after the state of Maryland and has 9 individuals placed receiving 3- or 6-month full-time internships with stipends paid for by the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).
- The passing of Bill 46-09: Hiring Preference for Individuals with Disabilities, which will provide meaningful employment and full benefits to those qualified disabled veterans and people with disabilities who are rated as well qualified and given a hiring preference.

Sharon Freiman, Commissioner, suggested that the Commission locate jobs within the County that individuals with intellectual and cognitive disabilities would be able to apply for. Betsy noted that the County has contracts with agencies that serve individuals with developmental disabilities, for example Rock Creek Foundation. These are called AP-1-10 Contracts, which are for supported employment. These individuals perform County jobs, such as library sorting and cleaning garages.

Jackie would like more information about Schedule A so that she can better educate the public about this issue. Mark explained that Schedule A allows for a qualified person with a significant disability to be hired without competition. It's a benefit for the hiring manager and cuts down the hiring process time. The Federal Government has been using the Schedule A system for 25 years, and it is effective when used properly. Any position in Montgomery County would be available using Schedule A.

The issue of a residency requirement for veterans was brought up during the meeting. Betsy stated that Maryland code requires that local municipality's institute a five year residency requirement for a hiring preference. That requirement has now been eliminated from Bill 46-09 because as a local jurisdiction we can exceed a minimum requirement.

If any Commissioners would like more information, they are welcome to speak with Mark. Mark suggested continuing this discussion at next week's Steering Committee meeting. He added that he would like the Commission to work on outreach. He suggested developing a video to promote the rights of individuals with disabilities that could be posted on the website.

Workgroup Announcements: None.

Roundtable:

Betsy suggested changing the Commission meeting time from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. A discussion about the proposed change will be held at next week's Steering Committee.

Mark Maxin, Chair, asked the Commission if they should do something for the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26th. Betsy noted that the state of Maryland holds a celebration every year. This year it is being held at the Camden Yards Warehouse in Baltimore on July 26th from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. She also suggested the possibility of having Montgomery County Cable TV channel air disability-related shows during the week of July 26th.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm

Next Full Commission Meeting: Wednesday, September 15th, 2010 – EOB, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD - Lobby Auditorium, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. ****PLEASE NOTE NEW MEETING TIME****

Steering Committee Meeting: Wednesday, September 22nd, 2010 - 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD - 1st Floor Tan Conference Room, 5:30pm to 6:30pm

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Office Services Coordinator
Betsy Luecking, Disability Policy Specialist